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## NORTHERN LIBERTY MARKET.

By WASHINGTON TOPHAM.

(Read before the Society, March 16, 1920.)

THERE is probably no institution in our city more vital to its welfare, and of more daily interest and concern to our people than the city market-house. This was recognized in the early history of our city as provision was made for a market-house as early as 1801, nearly a hundred and twenty years ago.

The history of our market houses, their dealers and patrons, would be no small part of our city life and activities, and in view of this, I have thought that a larger place might well have been given them in the records of our city's history.

Much that has been written relative to our markets has been given in paragraphs incidental or connected with other matters, and it has been no easy task to put such together in consecutive form.

For many of the facts here given I am indebted to Mr. W. B. Bryan, Dr. Wm. Tindall, *The Evening Star*, *The National Intelligencer*, and a number of our old and respected citizens who were connected with old Northern Liberty Market.

Among my earliest recollections is the old Northern Liberty Market. I lived, the first ten years of my life within three squares of this market, and I remember going there often with my mother during, and after the Civil War.

Old Northern Liberty Market stood on a public space containing 400,000 square feet, formed by the intersection

of New York Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue with K Street.

Before the city was laid out in 1800, this land was a part of the parcel known as Port Royal, and was owned by Lynch and Sands, who were among the original proprietors of the District of Columbia.

As early as 1843 definite efforts were made to establish a market at this place as shown by this article from the *National Intelligencer* of Monday, January 16, 1843:

“Northern Liberties Market Cause:—The subjoined communication, written by a respectable citizen who takes a lively interest in the concerns of this city, and who is a property holder in the Northern Liberties, will attract the notice, we presume, of all local legislators. We think that the subject is deserving of prompt consideration on the part of the City Council, and that, we have no doubt it will receive. The convenience of those citizens who reside within the Northern Liberties, now become so populous and respectable, seems to justify an acquiescence on the part of the City Councils in the required accommodation.

“Market House in the Northern Liberties. A large and respectable meeting of the inhabitants of the Northern Liberties was held last Friday evening at Mr. McLeod’s academy, for the purpose of memorializing the Boards of Aldermen and Common Council upon the propriety and necessity of establishing a market house at the intersection of Massachusetts and New York Avenues. We learn that this point was originally set apart for a market house in laying out the city, and that part of the ward is now so thickly settled that we think the time has arrived when their convenience should be accommodated. The petition does not solicit the aid of the Corporation, but merely asks to be allowed to erect the building by private subscription. It is desired, however, that the laws of the Corporation,

relative to markets may be made to extend to this one also; and it is hoped that the Councils will not longer refuse the petitioners the permission to erect the building, which seems to be called for by the loudest necessity."

It was in strict conformity with the requirements of the organic act of May 15, 1820, that the Congress of the United States conferred upon this corporation power and authority to occupy and improve for public purposes this public and open space.

Almost the entire body of residents and property holders in the immediate vicinity united in an application to the City Councils for the establishment of a market at that point. And in accordance with the application, an ordinance was passed authorizing its erection.

This act, approved by the Mayor, W. W. Seaton, March 11, 1846, was duly assented to by President James K. Polk, on the 20th of the same month.

The Northern Liberty Market was named such because of its location, which was within the boundaries of that part of the city known for many years as Northern Liberties, and was said to be bounded by "English Hill" and the commons on the east, the first ward on the west, down town on the south, and the "Slashes" on the north.

These were somewhat imaginary boundaries, and as near as they can be drawn by streets; the lines of Third or Fourth Street west, O Street north, Fifteenth Street west, and G Street, north, encompass that section.

Bryan's "History of the National Capital" states that as early as 1837, the section north of G Street and east of Twelfth, came to be known as the Northern Liberties, a term, presumably borrowed from Philadelphia; and that this locality was fast developing and attracting attention as a population center.

The name Northern Liberties, brought here from Phila-

delphia, as stated, came to stay, and by a fire company, two or three temperance organizations, three market-houses, clubs, etc., it has been brought down to the present generation.

In the early forties, what is now Mt. Vernon Square was a common and the name covered the neighborhood.

The market when first erected was a small brick structure on the west line of Seventh Street, when it was opened in 1846, but it was afterward enlarged by the addition of a similar one-story brick building on the south side, and did duty as the market place for the northern section of the city, till under the Board of Public Works in 1872, it was razed, a period of just twenty-five years.

It may be convenient at this point to give a brief description of the plan of the market house, for the purpose of showing the location of the different classes of stalls.

Originally the market house was a small brick structure running from the building line of Seventh Street westwardly about one-half the distance to Eighth Street, having two aisles running east and west, with rows of stalls upon the southern side of the south aisle, another along the north side of the north aisle, and a row of double stalls or stands along the center arranged in the form of squares; that is to say, between each four stalls and the adjacent four stalls or stands there were short aisles communicating with the main aisles. Subsequently this brick structure was extended through to Eighth Street, the arrangement of stands being similar to that already described, and between the old part and the new addition, what may be termed a main aisle ran north and south.

As the market business increased with a proportionate demand for room, extensions were made, first on the south side of the brick structure. This part of the extension was increased till it reached the street on the south side of the

square, sometimes known as K Street and sometimes as New York Avenue, there being another street known as K Street on the south side of the square. This southern addition or series of additions, extending westwardly to Eighth Street, formed much the larger portion of the market building or space. The main aisle, running north and south, just above referred to, was continued through this new part to the street, abutting the square on the south, and the two other aisles running in the same direction, north and south, were made, one near Seventh Street and the other near Eighth Street. On the north side of these additions, backed against the south wall of these brick structures, was a series of stalls practically set apart for the business of the butchers and so occupied at the time of the destruction of the market.

At a still later period in the history of the market, another addition, or frame structure, was built on the north side of the original brick building, and this extension covered two rows of stalls or stands, one abutting the north wall of the brick structure and the other on the opposite side of an aisle running east and west.

Besides the stalls or stands within the limits of the market house, spaces were sold upon the sidewalk or foot paths surrounding the market. These spaces were utilized by the erection of a bench on which to display the articles for sale, and a roof, sometimes a mere awning, and in some cases a tarred and gravel roof, to protect the occupant from the weather.

City directories of Washington have been issued since 1822, but the name, Northern Liberty Market, or Northern Market, is not mentioned in any of them until 1850.

The directory of 1850 gives the name of Wm. B. Wilson as clerk of the Northern Liberty Market, who probably was the first appointee to fill this office.

In the Washington Directory of 1822, by Judah Delano, is this reference to "Clerks of the Markets": "The regulations of the Corporation respecting market-houses, require a clerk to be appointed annually for each one, whose duty it is to attend the same during market hour, inspect all articles offered for sale, decide all differences between buyers and sellers, seize all articles offered for sale for a certain weight, which he may find deficient, and see that the regulations respecting markets are duly observed; and cause the Market-house to be swept every day immediately after market held therein shall be over. He receives a compensation of seventy-five cents for every market day he attends." It is very probable that the duties have since been lessened and the compensation increased.

By 1840, the section known as Northern Liberties was developing so rapidly that authority was secured, through an ordinance passed Nov. 5, 1840, to establish a fire company, and an engine house was built on Mt. Vernon Square, in the center of Eighth Street about on the south line of the parking, as the home of the Northern Liberty Fire Company. Later in the forties the armory of the Walker Sharpshooters (named after the gallant Sam. Walker, killed in Mexico) was located here. This building contained the only hall in this neighborhood.

In 1855 the city erected a building on the public space or triangle, bounded by New York Avenue, L, Fifth and Sixth Streets, Northwest, which was occupied by the fire company and later as a school. It was rebuilt in 1875 and is now the Abbott Public School.

By an ordinance passed May 27, 1855, it was provided that the public markets should not be held in any other than the following places: The Western Market in the First Ward; Center Market in the Third Ward; North-

ern Market in the Third Ward; and the Eastern Market in the Sixth Ward.

The Mayor was authorized to nominate, and with the consent of the Board of Aldermen, to appoint Commissioners to have charge of each of their markets, and their duties defined and compensation fixed.

What is known as the Northern Liberty Market House Riot occurred on June 1, 1857, and arose from the attempt of the Know Nothing party to prevent the participation of naturalized voters in the election at this time to fill some of the city offices.

Dr. Wm. B. Magruder had been elected Mayor just a year previous as the fusion candidate of the Democrats, Republicans and Free Soilers, against the Know Nothing Candidate, Silas B. Hill, by a margin of 13 votes only, out of a total of 5841 votes. This defeat of the Know Nothing party in Washington did not end their activities, for in this city election of June 1, 1857, a gang of 14 election strikers, or "Plug Uglies" from a club of that name, came over from Baltimore on the morning of June 1st, gathering in their train many of the disorderly elements in this city, and proceeded to the polling place at the Northern Liberty Market, on the south side of Mt. Vernon Square between Seventh and Eighth Streets.

The anti-Know Nothing voters were driven away. The police were defied and helpless. Mayor Magruder appealed to President Buchanan for troops. His request was referred to Secretary of the Navy, who promptly ordered out a hundred and ten marines from the Navy Yard, under Maj. Tyler and Capt. Maddox, who marched to the polling place, where they found a party of the disorderly element awaiting them with a six pound brass cannon, brought by the rioters from the old Anacostia Engine House, and placed under the Northern Liberty Market shed at the



corner of Seventh and K Streets. Mayor Magruder addressed the crowd, which by this time numbered about 1500 persons, and demanded that the polls be opened. His demand being refused, the order was given the marines to fire. A section of the marines then advanced under Maj. Tyler and took possession of the brass cannon. The mob, retiring, threw stones and fired pistols at the marines, one of whom was wounded. The marines were then ordered to fire, with the result that six persons were killed and twenty-one wounded, among whom were Justices Goddard and Dunn, officers Deggs and Birkhead and Gus. F. Klopfer, Chief of Police Capt. Baggott, ward commissioner R. B. Owens, Col. Williams, of the land office, Geo. D. Spencer, Geo. McElfresh and others. As a result of the voting in this and other precincts, the union or anti-Know Nothing ticket was successful.

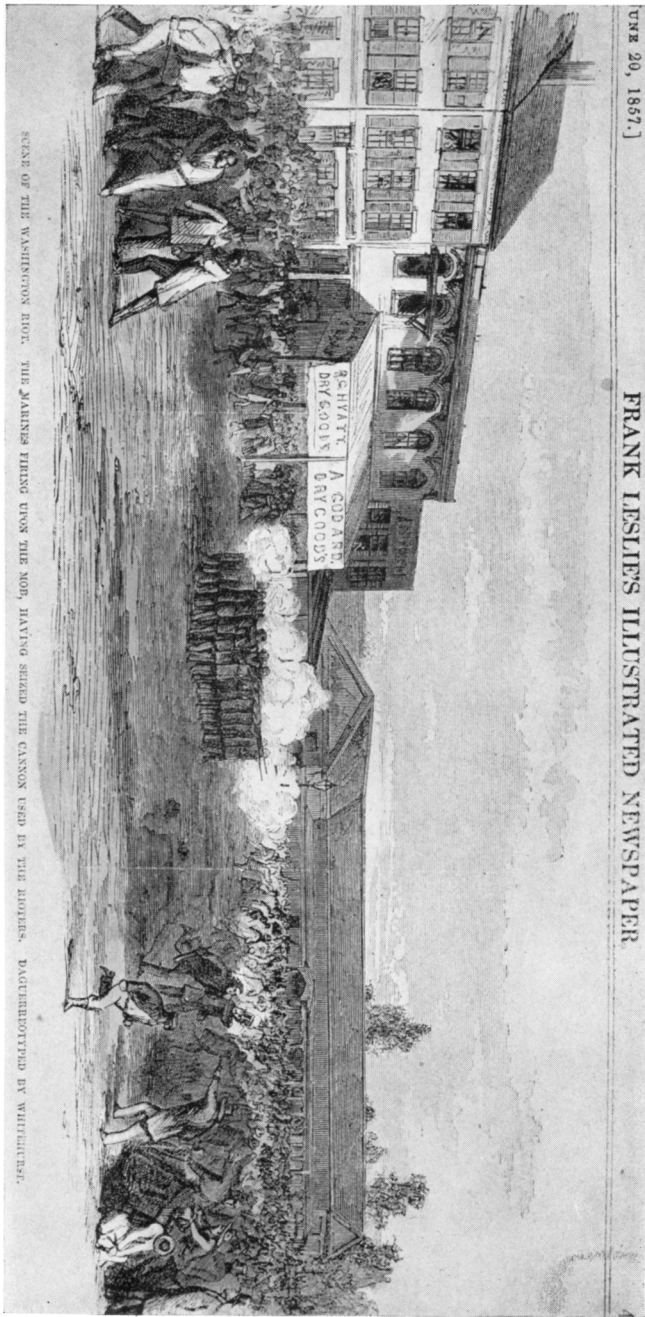
Early in 1860 a petition signed by a number of respectable citizens was presented to the Hon. Secretary of the Interior, asking for the removal of the Northern Liberty Market as a nuisance, to another locality, stating further that the long, low, ranges of sheds which compass it on the east, west and south sides are anything but pleasant to look upon. They further contended that it should be removed as it was occupying the public streets.

The select committee of citizens to which the communication had been referred by the Secretary of the Interior, replied at length contending that the market was not occupying the public streets, but public areas or spaces, a part of the original plan or system of providing public spaces for public uses. Signed by C. S. Jones, Thos. Sheckles and John B. Turton.

The patrons of the Northern Liberty Market did not have the advantages of street railways in 1860. At this time a line of omnibusses ran up Seventh Street as far

[JUNE 20, 1857.]

FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER



SCENE OF WASHINGTON RIOT

as L Street, and M Street was then spoken of as the limits of the city, and so continued until about 1867.

By 1863 this market had the advantages of the Seventh Street car service as far out as M Street, and by the close of the Civil War the Ninth Street extension of the Metropolitan system as far as Rhode Island Avenue, which was not continued further north until 1873.

In 1870 the Columbia line was built, passing on the south side of the old Northern Liberty Market. Old Northern Liberty Market had an important advantage in its location. The country trade was then principally down Seventh Street to the two most important markets. At the time of the building of this market it was stated by the *National Intelligencer* that Seventh Street was the leading business street.

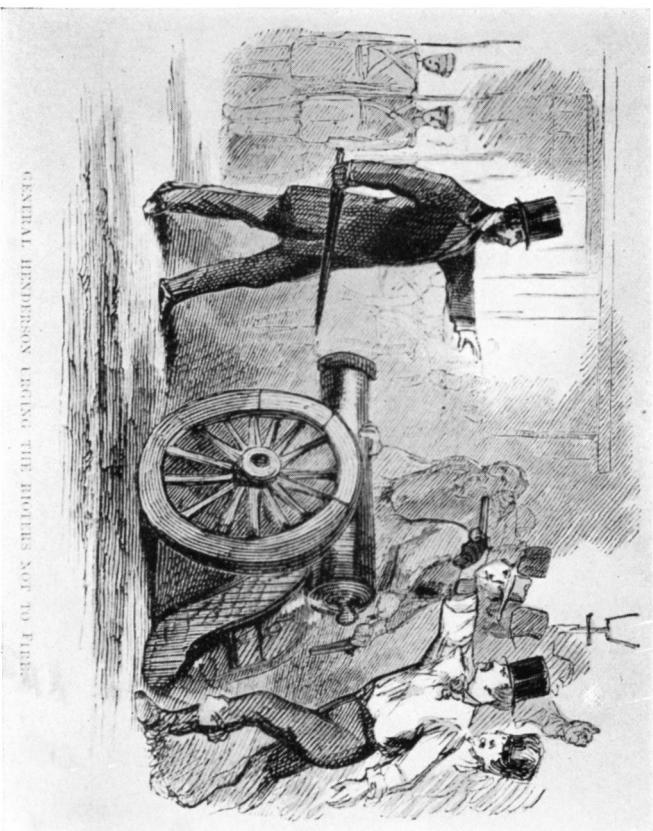
Seventh Street was paved with cobble stones until late in the seventies, when they were taken up and replaced with Belgian block.

The western portion of Mt. Vernon Square as I remember it in the sixties, was enclosed by a picket fence, and at the corners entrance was through wooden turnstiles. These were to prevent the entrance of animals which were then permitted in the streets. I remember often seeing geese, sheep, hogs and cows driven through the streets. On one occasion it is authoritatively related of Hon. John P. Hale, while walking along our city streets, "that a great pig ran against him, knocking him flat on his back against the pavement."

Among the more important buildings and residences which I recall in the sixties, facing the Northern Liberty Market and what is now Mt. Vernon Square, are the Southern Methodist or Mt. Vernon Place M. E. Church, recently torn down to make place for the new building for the National Association of Machinists. This church was

built by Dearing and Morsell, then members of the same fifty-one years ago, and I well remember its construction. After the church was finished and the burden of debt rather heavy, a way out was provided by these two liberal members in personally liquidating the final payment. Prof. Joseph Daniel, of public school fame, led the choir for many years.

Mr. W. W. Burdette lived north of the market at No. 805 K Street, Mr. Geo. W. Knox at No. 803 K, Mr. Lem Towers at No. 807 K and Mr. Alexander H. Young, the grocer, at N.W. corner of Eighth and K, and the residences of Maj. A. C. Richards and Mr. Jedediah Gittings just above on Eighth. Between Seventh and Eighth Streets on K, in No. 711, lived Valentine Harbaugh, the druggist, and W. T. Griffith, a leading tailor for years, at 705; 713, Noble D. Larner; 717, Col. Wm. G. Moore, and on the northeast corner of Eighth Street George S. Gideon, at one time President of the Washington & Georgetown R. R. Co. W. D. Spignul's coffee store was on the N.W. corner of Seventh and K Streets; Wm. Dunkhorst's tobacco store on the northeast corner, displayed for years one of the familiar wooden Indians in front of the door; Ruppert's restaurant on the southeast corner of New York Avenue and Seventh; Gustav Hartig's hardware store northeast corner Seventh and K Streets; directly in front of Mr. Hartig's store on what is now a most attractive public parking, and opposite the old market, small circus shows were given under a single tent. Afterward they were allowed to show west of the market on the unoccupied part of Mt. Vernon Square, a portion of which was the cattle market. An old, three-story frame building, occupied by Geo. M. Barker's sash and door mill, known as Noah's Ark, occupied the end of the square at Seventh, Massachusetts Avenue and K Street, razed long since to make place for the handsome brownstone and brick Home Savings Bank;



GENERAL HENDERSON URGING THE RIOTERS NOT TO FIRE

here the public hay scales were located for years. On the southeast corner of Seventh and Massachusetts Avenue, the "Oriental Restaurant" of Augustus Coppes and several low gable-roofed frame buildings, replaced by the fine brick buildings of the Jackson Furniture Co., and on the southwest corner of Seventh and K Streets, the grocery store of Wilson and Schultz; Chas. Dismer's restaurant next on the west, and the paint store of Richard Riggles; W. F. Reamer's furniture store on the corner of Eighth. A frame residence was opposite on the southwest corner of Eighth and K Streets. I well remember Burnett's old pottery, just a block below, corner of Eighth and I Streets, adjoining the Hebrew Temple property. A grocery store was in the frame building at the southeast corner of Ninth and K; and on the southwest corner, the brick residence of Mr. Chas. P. Wannall, the yard enclosed by a high brick wall, running down Ninth Street to the alley. This property was owned by Mr. John C. Harkness for many years. At the southwest corner of Ninth and K Streets was the 6th Precinct Police Station, Lieut. Kelly; and next the corner of New York Avenue and Ninth, one of the voting precincts, a good place to keep away from during election times in those days.

With my brother, I was detained in the above station house for an hour or two, one evening because an officer had detected us carrying some pieces of new lead pipe from our newly finished home on Massachusetts Avenue, at my father's orders. Had the telephone been in existence then our detention would have been briefer.

Brown's grain and feed store was on the end of the block at Ninth, Massachusetts Avenue and K Street, where the new marble M. E. Church South has recently been built; previously Mr. Temple's fine residence. At the northwest corner of Ninth Street and Massachusetts

Avenue was the fine three-story brick residence of Mrs. Sarah A. Graves, built in the fifties, afterward the home and office of Dr. J. Ford Thompson.

In the early seventies the people of Washington were brought face to face with the prospect of general city improvements on a larger and more extensive scale than ever before. Alexander R. Shepherd dominated the new city government, and was much praised and condemned. It was while under a congressional investigation in 1872, that he said that "he concluded that the Board of Public Works had been created for something or nothing, and if for anything, it was to devise and carry out as rapidly as possible some system of improvements, in order, that in this respect the Capital of the nation might not remain a quarter of a century behind the times."

Among the large improvements which followed under the direction of the Board of Public Works none were productive of more censure and condemnation than the summary destruction of Northern Liberty Market. For a quarter of a century this had not only been the market house of North Washington, but the business home of hundreds of market men and women, and a most successful institution financially as well. And the feeling and resentment that existed at that time on the part of the market people, dispossessed and deprived of their satisfactory and long established business place, is as keen today among those who survive.

On September 3, 1872, at about eight o'clock in the evening a large force of workmen in the employ of the Board of Public Works, suddenly appeared at the Northern Liberty Market at Seventh and Massachusetts Avenue, with picks and axes and rapidly tore down the buildings and sheds and cleared the square. Some of the dealers were on hand arranging their stocks and display for the following

morning; other dealers hearing of the demolition of their properties promptly appeared on the scene and remonstrated with the workmen but no effective resistance or delay was offered.

Interference or delay by injunction proceedings had been well provided against, not only by reason of the time selected for the destruction of the market, but by the fact that the Vice President of the Board of Public Works, Alexander R. Shepherd, had invited the Judges of the District courts to partake of his hospitality that evening at his country home, Bleak House, five miles north of the city.

With my brother I was present that evening, and mingled with the workmen during their work of destruction. So also was my cousin Millard Fillmore Bates with his terrier dog catching the rats and mice, as hundreds of them ran back and forth in quest of new shelter. As the sheds were tumbling down in all directions, a portion of the roof of one fell upon my cousin killing him instantly. Many years afterward, Congress awarded several thousand dollars to the surviving members of his family. One of the dealers in the market, John Widmayer, while giving orders to take down the sign over his stall, was killed by the sign falling upon him. The work of demolition was accomplished very rapidly and with a good deal of orderly precision. The scene that greeted the eyes of the people the following morning was one not to be forgotten.

There were over 100 claims for damages arising from the destruction of the Northern Liberty Market, aggregating \$592,215.00.

The Auditor of the District of Columbia, after eleven years investigation, from January, 1887, to November, 1898, had materially reduced the amount of the claims, and recommended the payment of the sum of \$128,578.00, involving 73 of the 100 or more claims submitted.



By the act of January 26, 1897, and the amendment of March 4, 1909, Congress directed the payment by the District of Columbia of the claims of property owners in the Northern Liberty Market for damages on account of the destruction of their property, and claims arising from the purchase, rent or use of stalls, etc., to the extent of \$130,766.08.

It was said that before the Northern Liberty Market was demolished, the stall holders valued their holdings at \$1,000 and upward.

Some of the things we used to see in the markets during and after the civil war, we do not get now, and are almost forgotten :

Who remembers—

William Oliver Shreeve, the berry man, selling the finest strawberries to be had in old Northern Liberty?

James Lavender & Sons' dried fruits and vegetables beautifully displayed right on the southeast corner of old Northern Liberty Market, where the brass cannon had been placed in the riot of 1857?

The Fish Stands, where "purty fish—live fish" were sold at five pounds for a quarter?

Large sturgeon, sometimes weighing from 100 to 200 pounds, making delicious steaks and stews?

The celebrated Washington Pie, made of stale bread, gingerbread and cakes, 1½ inches thick, large, generous slices only 5c and 10c per slice?

Dr. Bates' Celebrated Tonic Beer?

Jester's Celebrated Pawnee Medicine Root?

Unsworth's perambulating soda fountain, lemon, strawberry and sarsaparilla flavors at 5c per glass?

Several weeks before the destruction of the market, the authorities had given the marketmen notice to move, as the market buildings were in the way of proposed improve-

ments. They refused to leave although temporary structures had been provided for them on the lot on the east side of Seventh Street, between O and P Streets, northwest, which site the government had recently acquired. During the sixties it had been covered with government barracks and now to accommodate the market dealers suddenly forced out of their old market, stalls and sheds were hastily constructed here for their use by the authorities.

Although some distance to the north of their former places of business, and farther from the center of population and business traffic, many of the market men took advantage of this opportunity and rented stalls in what was then supposed to be temporary sheds.

Other dealers from the Northern Liberty Market went to Center Market.

The unexpected often happens and it was true in this move, for what was intended to be a temporary market at Seventh and O Streets became a permanent and paying one, and in a few years these dealers formed an association known as the Northern Market Co., and purchased the ground immediately opposite on Seventh Street, from Michael Hoover, then known as Rathwell's Garden, and built a brick market house thereon, which has proved a financial success ever since.

Sometime previous to the destruction of the Northern Liberty Market, indeed before the burning of the Center Market, the city authorities realizing the unsightly, unstable and unsanitary condition of our city markets, which had provoked so much unfavorable comment and criticism, had been planning elaborately to provide adequate and satisfactory market houses in various parts of the city, and to carry out which the legislature had authorized a bond issue of \$300,000.00, of which however, but \$152,000.00 was issued. Land was bought at Twenty-first and K Streets,

where a market house was begun in 1872, and ground leased on H between Second and Third Streets northeast, where the old K Street building was removed and erected.

The legislature had endeavored to select a site for a market in North Washington and appointed a Joint Committee on Markets, a sub-committee of which, composed of Messrs. Geo. F. Gulick, J. G. Carroll and Wm. Dickson, constituted for the purpose of selecting a site for a northern market, reported on Dec. 1, 1871, favoring the purchase of Square No. 515, located between K and L and Fourth and Fifth Streets northwest, as the most central and convenient locality for a market in the northern section of the city.

As a result of the dissatisfaction over the loss of their business at the Northern Liberty Market, and the hasty manner of their ejection therefrom, some of the dealers formed an association, known as the Northern Liberty Market Company, to erect a new market house in north Washington. As there had been a difference of opinion among the legislators as to the most appropriate site, so there had been among the dealers themselves. Some wanted to purchase the flat-iron shaped block just across Seventh Street, to the east, bounded by Sixth and Seventh and Massachusetts Avenue and K Street. Others wanted the site favored by the legislative committee previously referred to, at Fifth and K Streets.

The newly formed Association of dealers decided in favor of the latter site as the most available.

This was known as the "Savage Square" site, or square No. 515, bounded by Fourth and Fifth and K and L Streets northwest.

It had been the residence of George Savage, who purchased the same July 1, 1859. Going back to the beginnings of property in the District, like Mt. Vernon Square,

it was also a part of the parcel known as Port Royal, owned by Lynch and Sands. Mr. Savage retained this property about twelve years, and on July 8, 1871, conveyed to his two daughters, Mrs. Mary E. Woodward and Ada A. Savage, the west half of square No. 515, "for natural love and affection and \$10.00."

I well remember "Savage Square" as it was in the sixties, a large, attractive place, well fenced around with the large house near the south center of the lot facing K Street. In these days Mr. Savage was an ardent temperance advocate, and before Gov. Shepherd lowered the grade of Seventh Street four or five feet, necessitating the addition of a half dozen new granite steps to the already extensive Patent Office approach, Mr. Savage gave temperance lectures every Sunday afternoon to large audiences from these steps. Mr. Savage kept a hardware store with two good show windows, and on one occasion, was interrupted by one of his hearers, asking "what he was going to do with all those corkscrews in his window."

On January 27, 1874, The Northern Liberty Market Company consummated the purchase of the west half of square No. 515, from the Savage heirs, heretofore mentioned, for \$110,000.00.

In 1871 it had developed upon Wm. A. Cook, then corporation attorney, one of the most astute lawyers in the District, to examine the title of this property for the government, then planning for new market sites; he did not consider the title then vested in the two daughters as altogether satisfactory, in fact not what might be called a good title. I recently had in my hand the record of the transfer of this property from Lynch and Sands, when it was a part of Port Royal in 1793, down to the sale to the market company, and I observed that the names appearing in the transfer of the property to the market company, in-

cluded Geo. Savage, Susannah Savage, his wife, Mrs. Mary E. Woodward and Ada A. Savage, his daughters.

Mr. James H. McGill, a Washington architect and builder, was employed as architect and superintendent of construction, and plans commenced for the building of a new market, the company incorporating Feb. 23, 1874, under the name of the Northern Liberty Market Company.

A temporary market was erected on the east side of the lot to accommodate the dealers until the permanent structure was available. This was a well built and extensive affair, and was ready for occupancy on Saturday, June 27, 1874, and the opening is thus described in the *Evening Star* of June 29, 1874.

"The neighborhood between Fourth and Fifth and K and L Streets northwest presented quite an animated appearance on Saturday afternoon and night, June 27, 1874, occasioned by the opening of the Northern Liberty Market on Savage Square.

"The rapidity with which this market house has been constructed, with all the necessary fixtures appended, has attracted considerable attention and astonished the natives thereabouts, and goes to show the vim of the dealers, and that they mean business. The opening event had been heralded to the public on Saturday morning by means of a band of music, drawn by a four horse team, in an open wagon, on the sides of which was displayed the following inscription, in large letters: "Northern Liberty Market open tonight—Savage Square."

"After making the circuit of the city, the team drove to the market house at three o'clock, when the doors were thrown open, and a large American banner flung to the breeze from the flagstaff on the south end, amid cheering and music. The visitors and customers soon began to flock there to inspect the interior, all nicely fitted up with 304

stalls, which were laden with all the commodities usually offered in our markets—the dealers in their places, with their scales and measures ready to serve all.

“Inspector Wolf was on hand, and stated to the *Star* reporter that he had been through the stalls, and had never before seen a better stock of meats, vegetables, fruit, etc., in any market than was there displayed.

“This temporary building is of wood, 324 feet in length and 68 feet wide, contains eight rows of stalls, all separated by passages, thus making each one a corner stall.

“Gas and water have been introduced, one jet to each stall, chopping blocks, hooks and all the paraphernalia, and when lighted up, later in the evening it had the appearance of a well established market house. The butchers occupy the center rows of stalls, with bacon, butter and vegetable stands on either side. The company has given orders for an extension, making room for fifty additional stalls.

“It is the intention to keep this market, at present, open on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings, and Saturday afternoon and nights, if necessity requires it.

“The plans for the permanent structure, which is to be of brick and granite, have been completed and adopted by the company.”

Three days before, on June 24, 1874, the *Star* had the following:

“The sale of stalls in the new sheds of the Northern Liberty Market Co., on the Savage Square property, by Mr. Thomas Dowling, auctioneer, was held yesterday, until near sun down, and over 200 were sold. The sale of the remaining stalls will be resumed this afternoon at 2 P.M.”

In July following, the work of construction upon the permanent New Northern Liberty Market began under most favorable circumstances. James H. McGill was the architect, and the contractors and builders were Robert Clarkson,

Augustus Davis, C. C. Martin and J. C. Walker, and the iron work and massive steel trusses supporting and forming the immense roof, said at the time to be the largest single span roof unsupported by girders or central columns, in the country, were furnished by the Architectural Iron Works of New York.

James A Hoffman, John R. Kelly, Theodore Barnes, Geo. M. Oyster, Sr., were said to be the leading spirits and most active and ambitious for the success of the new undertaking. James A. Hoffman, was the first President of the company, Theodore Barnes, Treasurer, and Geo. W. King, Clerk.

The work on the new structure was carried on during the summer and fall of 1874 without interruption until the big north wall, which was to be 126 feet wide by 85 feet high, was nearing completion, and Mr. Clarkson remonstrated with the architect against its completion at that time, stating that the wall would not stand without additional strengthening or supports. Upon thorough investigation it was decided to add abutments to this wall, when the work was resumed, and by Nov. 14th the big steel trusses were being placed in position, and a large photograph taken of the building at this juncture, which I have had the pleasure of seeing.

In the *Evening Star*, of Jan. 4, 1875, I find the following: "The new spacious market building erected by the Northern Liberty Market Co., on Savage Square, fronting on Fifth Street, between K and L Streets, being nearly completed, the sale of stalls commenced at eleven o'clock today in the center of the new building, and was attended by a very large crowd of dealers and others. Mr. Thomas Dowling was the auctioneer, and the sale of stalls was to the highest bidder. The rental prices of the stalls were \$5.00 and \$10.00 each per month for upkeep. Mr. John

R. Kelly secured the first choice of butcher's stalls No. 204-206 and 208, for which he bid \$3,350.00. John Ruppert secured the second choice at \$2,500.00 for stall No. 304 on the main aisle. Theodore Barnes secured No. 306 and 308, for \$2,550; M. C. Weaver, stalls No. 314 and 316 for \$2,550.00; Joseph Prather, No. 326 and 328 for \$2,550.00; J. A. Hoffman, President, No. 226 and 228 for \$2,200.00; Henry Buscher, Benj. S. Elliott, Louis Kengla, B. F. Hunt, M. Menke, J. C. Fearson & Sons, Wm. A. Coburn, Rudolph Eichhorn, James Lavender & Son, Wm. Heine, John Hammond, H. Homiller, Wm. Greenapple, M. Glorius, John Hoover & Bro., Chas. Brown & Bro., Joseph Weyrich, J. D. Faunce and others, names familiar and well remembered, also purchased stalls." The sales were dated from Jan. 1, 1875, and were for 99 years.

The following is a description of this spacious market house, as given by the *Evening Star*, of Jan. 4, 1875: "It covers the whole of the west side of Savage Square, bounded by Fifth and K and L Streets northwest. The enclosed portion consists of one immense room, 324 feet long, 126 feet wide, 35 feet high on the sides, and 85 feet in the center, without a single interior column or obstruction. The foundation walls are of stone, and on account of the marshy condition of the ground, had to be started twelve feet below the surface. The walls of the superstructure are of red brick, laid in white mortar, with arches of pressed brick laid in black mortar. The belt and sill courses, keystones and exterior trimmings are of gray granite.

"The entire frame work of the roof is of wrought iron, about 209 tons of iron being used. The roof is supported by 14 arched trusses, each of a single span of 126 feet.

"The frame work of the roof is boarded with narrow planed boards, with the finished side down, and the out-



side covered with tin. A skylight and ventilator 20 feet wide extends along the center of the roof, the entire length of the building.

"The floor of the building is paved with large flags of North River bluestone, laid with a fall of four feet in the length of the building, so that when water is turned on from the numerous pavement washers, inserted in the floor, it can be thoroughly washed out. Five wide aisles extend the length of the market, and fifteen extend across the building, with stalls on each side.

"There are 284 stalls. The building is sewered and supplied with water, and is lighted with 21 large reflectors and two dock lights.

"The cost of the building, as estimated by James H. McGill, the architect, who has planned and superintended all of the company's work, is about \$150,000.00. The market will be opened by a promenade concert on the 14th inst., given for the benefit of the families of the men who were killed or injured while working on the building, and will be opened for business on the following Saturday night, the 16th inst."

The capable, enterprising men who planned and built this splendid structure, had been successful in their previous market experiences, and looked forward to greater success than ever in their splendidly built and equipped new market home. Business was good and increasing at old Northern Liberty Market, and in the months they were quartered in their temporary market on Savage Square it never was better; yet from the day the new market was opened, business began to decline, and I have yet to meet one of the old dealers who does not feel that the building of this market at that time was a mistake.

Various reasons have been advanced as contributing causes. Mr. Geo. Menke, one of the old dealers, tells me

that when the original New York Avenue car line was built with its western terminus at Seventh Street, business was better, but when that line was turned down Fifth Street, carrying their passengers down town toward Center Market, trade fell off again, and he has found no one in the forty-five years that have passed who has given satisfactory reasons for a declining trade from the opening day. Even the old Chariot line that ran in front of this market, both on New York Avenue and Fifth Street, in the eighties, did not seem to boom business materially.

Mr. C. O. Bohrer is the present Superintendent, following his father, and he tells me there is not a dealer in the market today, who was there in the seventies.

There are several reasons which might be mentioned as contributing to the misfortune of this market. It was begun and finished during the extended panic that prevailed from 1873 to 1879. The market was moved two blocks eastward from the old market, away from the business center and car lines, and in a neighborhood not so populous and prosperous.

In 1891 Gen. Ordway, having purchased the stock of the Gunton estate in this market, became the president of the company and the controlling factor. A second floor or story was added to the building after which it was known as Convention Hall, or Convention Hall Market, although it is still the Northern Liberty Market Company. It is the largest hall in Washington, seating 5000 persons, and with added standing room to accommodate 10,000.

Here some of the largest and most notable gatherings and conventions in the city's history have taken place, viz.: The great Hammond and Bentley revival meeting of Wednesday, May 10, 1876, on the lower floor; the 90th birthday anniversary celebration of Gen. Neal Dow, of Maine; the Moody and Sankey and Gipsev Smith, Sr., revivals;

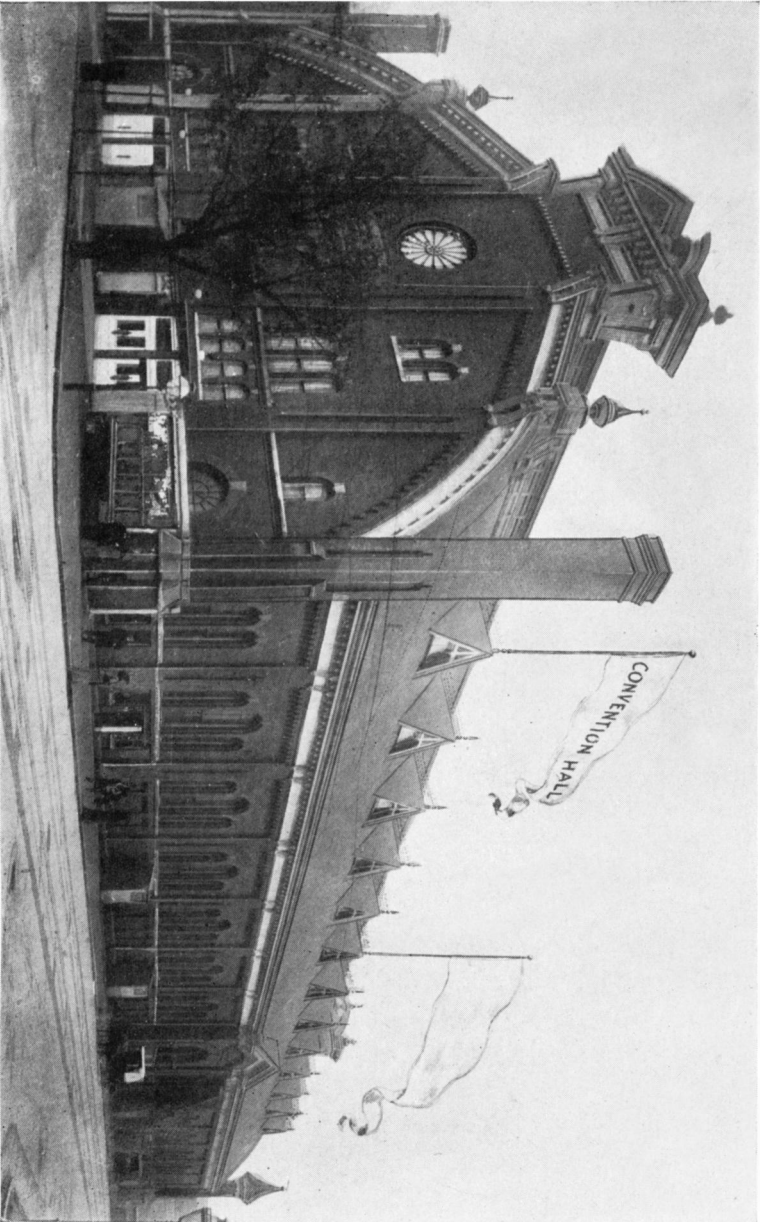
the Masonic Fairs; the World's Sixth Sunday School Convention of 1910, and many religious, civic and business conventions, and the last, and one of the most important uses for this famous hall, has been its occupancy by several bureaus of the United States Government, during and since the recent World War, by the Internal Revenue Bureau of the Treasury Department and later the Department of Vocational Education.

The market was put up at auction some years ago, there were but two bidders, and Mr. Stilson Hutchins being the highest bidder, came into possession of the property, and Northern Liberty Market is the property of the Hutchins estate at this time, but the memories of the name and neighborhood of Northern Liberty Market will long remain among the possessions of our citizens.

Mt. Vernon Square today is permanently improved and beautified, far beyond the vision and ambitious plans of Alexander R. Shepherd, who did so much to stimulate the patriotic pride of the American people, in seeking to make the nation's Capital an object of universal admiration.

The new Public Library building on Mt. Vernon Square, the gift of Mr. Andrew Carnegie, to Washington, was dedicated and formally presented to the people of the Capital on Wednesday, January 7, 1903.

President Roosevelt and Mr. Carnegie participating in the exercises, Mr. Theodore W. Noyes was its President, and accepted the building in behalf of the Trustees of the Public Library.



CONVENTION HALL AND MARKET